



15th Annual Police Memorial

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, May 25, 2009

Memorial Day is a day when we commemorate those who died serving in our military. For the past 15 years, the City of San Jose has recognized our police officers at an annual Police Memorial Ceremony. This started in 1995 under Mayor Susan Hammer. The event has grown from a small event to one that draws many.

The Police Memorial is held in the City Hall Rotunda—an expensive building however a beautiful setting for the service. The police chaplain does the invocation, followed by the color guard and bagpipers. Speeches are given by the Mayor, Chief of Police, and President of the Police Union. Then we move to the “Bell Ceremony,” when the names of each of the officers who have died in the line of duty are read, with a brief statement about how they died.

San Jose has lost 11 police officers in the line of duty, from Sgt. Van Dyck Hubbard in 1924 to Officer Jeffrey Fontana in 2001. Wearing the badge carries risk, as we only need to look at recent events in Oakland, where four officers were shot dead, or Pittsburgh, where three officers were ambushed. I believe that as soon as an officer puts on the badge, he or she becomes a target, since officers have been gunned down for simply wearing the uniform.

Something more common, and usually not talked about, is that the stress of the job has led several police officers in San Jose to commit suicide. It is difficult to articulate the stress that might lead an officer to end his or her life since I do not wear those shoes. However, if it is about depression or anger we should work to avoid it. Some of this is done behind the scenes by the two police Chaplains. The Chaplains are funded by private donations and the police union. The Chaplains take time to counsel officers that need a wise and thoughtful person to talk to about the stress of the job.

The closing of the ceremony is held outside with the flags at City Hall being drawn to half mast and police officers lining up in formation. A “riderless horse” walks by signifying a fallen officer. There is a lot of

ritual in the ceremony which makes it very symbolic. I encourage you to attend next year as it is a public event held during the lunch hour.

Enjoy your BBQ with friends and family today as well as your day off if you are fortunate to be fully employed. Please tilt your soda/beer twice to both our military men and women who carried the ultimate sacrifice and those closer to home in our San Jose Police Department.

On another note my Budget Deficit Survey is still open and I would like your feedback.

Here is the survey link:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=bRmrEkMutPaRN DzI3Q3GRQ 3d 3d>

Based on the current responses (55 percent male and 45 percent female) here is the Top Ten List for City Services from question six:

1. Police
2. Fire
3. Streets
4. Sewers
5. Libraries
6. Parks
7. Disaster Preparedness
8. Planning (Land Use)
9. Code Enforcement
10. Trails

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